



HOMELESSNESS IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

A Report by the Research Task Force on the Homeless

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The issue of people wandering and without a place to call home has been present throughout this nation's history. Recently public attention has focused on the concern of those who are without permanent residence, the homeless. The growing concern reflects two significant trends: the number of homeless people is increasing and homelessness is becoming a problem of epidemic proportions.

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The research process was conducted by a team which divided the various tasks. Most data were gathered from field observations and interviews with homeless individuals and key people involved in the service delivery system. In addition, records of service use were obtained from shelters to estimate the extent and demographic characteristics of the homeless population. This report represents three months (September-December, 1986) of interviewing, information gathering, and data processing by a team of students under the direction of the instructor.

The issue of people wandering and without a place to call home has been present throughout this nation's history. Recently public attention has focused on the concern of those who are without permanent residence, the homeless. The growing concern reflects two significant trends: the number of homeless people is increasing and homelessness is becoming a problem of epidemic proportions.

Agreement on what constitutes being homeless is difficult to assess. The Department of Health and Human Services defines the homeless as "those who lack shelter and the financial resources necessary to acquire it, and revert to seeking shelter from public or private facilities." There are numerous reasons why people are homeless, as well as great debate as to the number of homeless. Nevertheless, there is general agreement that homelessness is a growing problem and needs our attention.

The image of the homeless person has changed. It is no longer the white, middle-aged alcoholic male who chooses to remove himself from mainstream society. The face of the homeless include children, women, families, and people who look like anyone else. The homeless cannot easily be recognized, making it difficult to target services and to ascertain the degree of need.

This research study grew out of an interest in the problem of homelessness in this community, and a simultaneous discovery that very little data existed in a comprehensive form. Students, under the auspices of a community analysis course (University of Illinois School of Social Work at Urbana), chose to analyze the conditions, services, and needs of the homeless population in Champaign-Urbana. The goal of this project was twofold: to identify the extent and dimensions of the problem, and to make a contribution to the service delivery system by publicizing the resources available and furthering the development of a service network.

In the process of this research, it became clear that the Champaign-Urbana community is witnessing an increase in the incidence of homelessness and as a result, a necessary expansion of services. In addition, there is a growing population of "near-homeless" people. The near-homeless are those who have a permanent residence, but with the onset of a financial, medical or personal crisis would quickly find themselves without a home. This report outlines such findings, analyzes how these characteristics compare to larger urban areas, and proposes directions for future work.

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Background:

The provision of temporary shelter has existed in Champaign-Urbana for years. The Salvation Army, Family Services, and the Red Cross have been providing assistance since the 1940's. However, the need for services which provide shelter and food has changed in recent years.

By the mid 1970's, the need for shelters began to surface in Champaign-Urbana. The Winter Emergency Men's Shelter opened in 1977 in response to the need to provide shelter for homeless men during the coldest months of the year. A year later, The Roundhouse opened. It was developed in response to a need for services for runaway and homeless youth and includes a temporary crisis shelter. Catholic Worker House opened in 1980. It was originally a house for refugee families and grew into a shelter serving homeless families. Until 1985, no shelter facility existed exclusively for women and their children. A Woman's Place began in 1971, but its purpose has always been to serve women who are victims of domestic violence. By 1985, demands placed upon A Women's Place made it clear that there was a growing number of homeless women and children in need of shelter. Consequently, the Women's Emergency Shelter was opened in June of 1985 and offers temporary shelter to women and their minor children.

Scope of Homelessness in Champaign-Urbana:

Accurate determination of the homeless population is very difficult. The nature of the problem - people without an address, without a permanent home - does not lend itself to easily assessing a definitive count of the homeless. The most common measure is to depend on use of services by the homeless over a set period of time. While this provides a good estimate, it does not reflect the true magnitude of the problem. A census of service users ignores two crucial populations: those who do not utilize such services, and those who fall through the cracks because of a shortage in what help is available.

✓ This study has attempted to identify the number of service users, compile an estimate of the homeless population, and outline demographic characteristics of the homeless in C-U. Data from two shelters (one men's and one women's) representing service use from November 1, 1985 through October 31, 1986 were analyzed to outline some of the characteristics of the homeless population. In total, 446 cases were analyzed. Service records of the other area shelters were included when estimating the total number of homeless people in C-U.

✓ The state of homelessness is rarely a short-term condition. Once a person finds him or herself without a permanent residence, it takes considerable time to reintegrate back into mainstream society. People faced with needing the services of a shelter have exhausted all of their resources. Usually they lack employment. When working, rarely can they earn enough to pay monthly rent. Most often they have run out of outside places to stay, such as those which may be provided by friends and family. Once homeless, finding a job or a place to live becomes much more difficult. Without an address and sufficient income, it is virtually impossible to find a place to live and provide the necessary references and security deposits. Applying for jobs also becomes an impossibility. Access to phones and job hunting aids are limited, and most prospective employers are hesitant to hire a person without a permanent address (and moreso if their address is a shelter).

Current Services Available:

Consequently, the state of being homeless usually involves a considerable period of time, and in many cases is a condition of which people float in and out.

Data gathered on the use of shelters and services in Champaign-Urbana over the past year suggest there were 900 homeless people. This estimate includes men, women, and children. Service records clearly indicate that about 900 people used shelter services during the 12 month period. What is not included in this estimate are those who tried to use shelters but were turned away due to lack of space (an average of more than 20 women per month were turned away from one area shelter over the past four months, and with them undoubtedly numerous children). In addition, lacking in this count are those who did not use a shelter at all. It is impossible to determine the number of those who do not use shelters, but research and interviews reveal that they do exist. Consequently, the true extent of the homeless population is difficult to estimate.

Also, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many people are homeless at a given period in time. However, based on service records and personal interviews, a significant portion of this population experienced a state of homelessness for a protracted amount of time. Almost 20% of the men had already been using the shelter before the 12 month period of analysis. The personal experiences of the homeless population and the stopgap design of services confirm the long-term nature of being without a permanent residence.

The average length of stay for women in the shelter was 23.2 nights while for men the average was 5.7 nights. This difference reflects two elements: 1) the operating standards of the women's shelter permit stays of 4 to 6 weeks while the men's shelter does not allow a consecutive stay of over three nights in any given week, and 2) women are much more vulnerable on the street and are therefore not as transient as men. These tendencies are obvious in that 43% of the men stayed only one night compared to 19% of the women.

Further analysis of the data reveals that 18% of the men are from the C-U area (another 5% cite family from the area) and 61% of the women are local. This may be misleading because the men tend to be hesitant to identify their previous home location because of estrangement from families and concern over being viewed as a potential loafer and troublemaker (more than 12% did not provide a previous home location). However, there is no doubt that men are more mobile. This is not surprising considering that homeless men rarely, if ever, have children accompanying them, while homeless women are often responsible for children.

The age of the homeless differs significantly by gender. The typical homeless male is 43 years of age compared to the average homeless woman who is 31 years old. Overall, men comprise about 70 to 75% of the homeless and women 25 to 30%.

Interpretation of the data suggest a number of trends in relation to the homeless population in C-U. It is clear that the number of homeless people is increasing at a significant pace. Within the growing homeless population, women and children are becoming homeless at a faster rate. Shelter space has been enlarged due to growing demand, and still there are not enough beds for those in need. Over the past year, all the shelters have had to turn away people, particularly those shelters which provide for women and children.

Current Services Available:

The chart which follows (pp. 5-8) is a compilation of agencies serving the homeless in Champaign-Urbana. The information was obtained through in-person interviews and written information gathered from the agencies. The search for services began with contacting the Central Information and Referral Service and the local phone book. Throughout the interviewing process, additional services were discovered. No current social service directory for the community was available.

The shelters in the community include Catholic Worker House for families; Roundhouse for children (including runaways and lockouts); Salvation Army Men's Shelter, the only year-round facility for men; Winter Emergency Shelter for Men (from Nov.-April); Women's Emergency Shelter for women and their children; and A Woman's Place for battered women and their children. All of the shelters provide meals, beds, and some informal or formal staff assistance.

All of the shelters have a limited staff and budget. Most shelters express a need for more volunteers and resources. Efforts which extend beyond the essentials of food and shelter are to be commended. Particular aspects of current programs are mentioned here to highlight unique services and encourage a sharing of ideas. Roundhouse provides 7-10 hours a week of individual and family counseling. A Woman's Place offers extensive individual and group counseling. Women are helped to mobilize community resources and work through their crises. Many referrals are made to community resources. Bus passes are available for appointments, jobs, and apartment searches. Catholic Worker House will provide transportation to appointments, interviews, and places to pick up medicine. Guests are encouraged to job search, and may be assisted with staff knowledge of open jobs. The staff may act as a personal reference of the guests, writing letters of recommendations or talking with landlords. Names of landlords and babysitters are provided to guests.

Shelters strive for a balance between promoting individual responsibility and providing assistance. An accessible staff and the staff role as referral agent and resource mobilizer are extremely important when assisting homeless persons.

In addition to providing basic services, such as shelter and food, it is important for the Champaign-Urbana community to provide services which will prevent near-homeless persons from becoming homeless. Preventive services include assistance for rent, energy bills, and home improvements for substandard housing. Without such assistance near-homeless people are unable to afford their current housing and are in danger of becoming homeless.

As shown on the chart, current preventive services in Champaign-Urbana are scarce. Empty Tomb provides home maintenance, rental, and energy assistance. Funding for the home maintenance program is provided by Community Development Block Grants through the federal government. Reductions in federal funding since 1980 threaten to curtail this program.

The Helping and Loan Work Fund of Empty Tomb, the energy assistance program of the Urban League, and the General Assistance program of the township office provide energy and rental assistance. The Helping and Loan

| AGENCY NAME | LOCATION | PHONE | HOURS | SERVICES | POPULATION | NEEDS |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Women's Emergency Shelter | 604 W. Hill, C | 352-7151 | closed 1:00-4:30 pm | *Shelter and 3 meals *Counseling | *Women and Children | *Household products *Volunteers *Donations |
| A Woman's Place | | 384-4390 (24-hour crisis line) | 24 hours | *Shelter and 3 meals *Child Care for guests *Counseling | *Battered Women and Children | *Volunteers *Food *Donations *Kitchen Supplies |
| Catholic Worker House | 1308 W. University, U | 328-1446 | closed 1:00-6:00 pm | *Shelter and 3 meals *Lunch for non-guests *Job and Housing Referral | *Women, Married Couples, Children | *Volunteers *Food *Household products |
| Salvation Army Social Services *Men's Shelter | 511 N. Neil, C | 373-7830 | intake 7:30-10:00pm | *Shelter and 2 meals | *Men | *Food *Donations |
| *Thrift Store | 119 E. University, C | 373-7825 | 9:00-4:00pm M - Sat. | *Clothes *Gasoline Money | *Individuals and Families | *Clothes |
| Winter Emergency Shelter (Mckinley) | 809 S. Fifth, C | 344-0297 | intake 10:00pm - 7:00am | *Shelter and 2 meals | *Men | *Volunteers *Food *Donations |
| Roundhouse (Children's Home and Aid Society) | 311 W. White, C | 359-5276 | 24 hours | *Counseling *Shelter and 3 Meals | *Children, 10-17 years of age | *Household Products *Food *Volunteers (337-1515) |

| AGENCY NAME | LOCATION | PHONE | HOURS | SERVICES | POPULATION | NEEDS |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Family Services of Champaign County *Central Information Referral | 4055 State, C 352-6300 | 352-0099 (24-hour crisis line) | 8:30-5:00pm M, Th, F 8:30-8:00pm T, W | *Food *Referral *Counseling | *Families and Individuals | *Food *Volunteers |
| Empty Tomb | 1310 W. University, U | 344-2262 | 1:00-5:00pm M,T,Th,F 2:00-5:00pm W | *Housing Assistance *Food *Clothing | *Families and Individuals | *Food *Clothing *Donations |
| Crisis Line | 101 E. Healey,C | 359-4141 | 24 hours | *Referral *Crisis Intervention | *Families and Individuals | *Volunteers |
| United Way of Champaign County | 1201 W. University, U | 328-5151 | 8:30-5:00pm | *Assistance to Shelters | N.A. | N.A. |
| Urban League | 17 Taylor, C | 356-1364 | 9:00-5:00pm by app't | *Energy Assistance *Weatherization | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Champaign Township | 603 S. Randolph, C | 352-4500 | 8:30-12:00 1:00-4:00pm | *General Assistance | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Cunningham Township | 205 W. Green, U | 384-4144 | 9:00-12:00 1:00-5:00pm | *General Assistance | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |

| AGENCY NAME | LOCATION | PHONE | HOURS | SERVICES | POPULATION | NEEDS |
|---|------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------|-------|
| Mental Health Center of Champaign Co. | 600 East Park, C | 398-8080 359-4141 (24-hour crisis line) | 8:30-7:00pm M,Th 8:30-5:00 T,W,F | *Counseling | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Carle Foundation Hospital | 611 W. Park, U | 337-3311 337-3313 (emergency) | 24 hours | *Medical | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Burnham City Hospital | 407 S. Fourth, C | 337-2500 337-2535 (emergency) | 24 hours | *Medical | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Frances Nelson Health Center | 1306 Carver, C | 356-1558 | 9:00-12:00 1:00-5:00pm M,W,Th,F 9:00-8:00 T | *Medical *Dental | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Champaign-Urbana Public Health District | 710 N. Neil, C | 352-7961 | 8:00-4:00pm M,Th,F 8:00-6:00pm T,W | *Medical *Counseling | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Planned Parenthood of Champaign Co. | 314 Neil, C | 359-8022 | 8:00-5:00pm M,W,F 8:00-8:00pm T,Th | *Medical *Counseling | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| Prairie Center for Substance Abuse | 122 W. Hill, C | 356-7576 359-1160 (24-hour crisis line) | 8:00-4:30pm M-F | *Counseling *Outpatient treatment *Detoxification | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |

| AGENCY NAME | LOCATION | PHONE | HOURS | SERVICES | POPULATION | NEEDS |
|---|------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Mercy Hospital | 1400 W Park, C | 337-2000 | 24 hours | *Medical | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| IL Department of Veteran's Affairs | #4 Henson Pl., C | 333-5737 | 8:30-5:00pm M-F | *Veteran's Benefits | *Veterans | N.A. |
| IL Department of Public Aid | 405 S State, C | 333-5605 | 8:30-5:00pm M-F | *Food Stamps *Medicaid | *Families and Individuals | N.A. |
| American Red Cross Champaign County Chapter | 105 E White, C | 336-2575 | 9:00-5:00pm | *FEMA Grant | *Grants to Shelters | N.A. |

Work Fund depends on donations and provides rental and energy grants to persons who are occasionally unable to pay monthly bills. Through the energy assistance program of the Urban League, low income households receive grants to pay energy bills particularly during winter months. Last year, more than 2500 in the area received assistance through this program. Unfortunately, reductions in federal funding have also affected this program. Finally, General Assistance provided by the township office offers limited grants to low income persons who become unemployed and do not qualify for other forms of assistance.

While job assistance in Champaign-Urbana is provided informally at some area shelters, the Urban League and township offices assist unemployed persons with locating jobs in the community. These programs are important and need to be maintained and expanded for both the near-homeless and homeless.

Health Services:

Health authorities are quick to agree that there is a problem with homelessness in Champaign-Urbana. Various reasons are given: mental illness, lack of public housing, and inadequate shelters being the most common explanations. Whatever the causes of homelessness, we do know that homelessness causes sickness. People who live on the streets are plagued with colds, pneumonia, infestations, infections, nutritional and vitamin deficiencies, alcoholism, drug abuse, tuberculosis, and mental illness.

Health authorities voice a common frustration - there are free health care services available to homeless people in C-U but this population is not using the services. Why?

Consider the lifestyle of a homeless person. His or her daily concerns are for food and shelter, not health care. A man or woman who lives on the street will typically seek treatment only when his or her health has deteriorated to a life-threatening degree. When forced to seek care, most homeless people go to a hospital emergency room. Few private physicians are willing to work with this population. There is no guarantee of reimbursement from a patient without insurance, who is not on public aid, and who does not have a permanent address.

Documentation is a critical component of health care. But the paperwork, protocol, and procedures of an emergency room can seem intimidating and overwhelming to a man or woman who lives on the street. Basic questions regarding residence, social security number, and medical history are often meaningless and serve to emphasize that the homeless person is different and set apart from the rest of society. A homeless man suffering from stomach cramps, when asked why he did not see a doctor, replied:

When I go to the hospital they always ask me questions I don't know like where I live. I don't live nowhere. I just need some medicine.

Champaign County is rich in medical resources for the poor. Most medical services are available at no charge or on a sliding scale fee schedule. (However, there is a need for health services which provide adult eyeglasses and dentures.) Nevertheless, the process for securing health

services is not a system which homeless people can easily access. Because homelessness means one lacks a residence, stability in lifestyle, and a lack of economic means, a person is at a great disadvantage in participating in our current health care system.

The Personal Experience:

In order to fully understand the concerns of the homeless, it is important to address the personal element. What is it like for a homeless individual to survive in Champaign-Urbana? Through this assessment process, sweeping generalizations about the homeless population in the area cannot be made. However, in-depth interviews and personal observations can help to underscore overall characteristics of the homeless in this community.

Attempts to locate and understand the homeless population in Champaign-Urbana utilized numerous community assessment techniques. These included: field observations, informal interviews, and participant observation.

Field observations were conducted through 12 outings to street and public facilities. During these outings, researchers attempted to identify locations and homeless individuals for potential interviews. Informal interviews were conducted in both shelter and street settings. Typically, these interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes, and were all on a voluntary basis. Interviews were also conducted with key informants, such as directors of shelters and facilities for the homeless. These key informants were able to provide linkage to potential interviewees, in addition to providing information about characteristics of homeless individuals.

This sample only represents a portion of the homeless population in Champaign-Urbana. The most rapidly growing population of homeless individuals, women and children, were found to be relatively inaccessible. It is more difficult to locate and interview women and children for two reasons: the protective structure of the women's shelter systems and the invisibility of this group on the street due to its vulnerable nature.

The following statistics are derived from a sample of 14 individual interviews with homeless people in Champaign-Urbana. Twelve interviews were conducted in area shelters, while two took place on the street. The following summary is a profile of the male sample only:

- * The racial breakdown of the 13 males was: 11 white, 2 black.
- * Age range: 19-61 years, with the average age being 39.7 years.
- * Range of time being homeless: Two days to 25 years.
- * Range of time spent homeless in Champaign-Urbana: One day to 13 years.
- * All had been employed full-time at some point, but at the time of the interviews, three reported part-time employment. All but two reported a continuous job search.
- * 40% reported being divorced which was noted as a turning point in their lives. Of this 40%, 70% had children.
- * Educational Background: For five individuals, the information was unavailable. Five had high school diplomas, two of which reported post high school education, five had dropped out of school at some point in their lives.

- * 70% indicated having some family in Champaign-Urbana.
- * Institutionalization: Six individuals gave no information, five reported being in a correctional facility, one reported time spent in a mental health facility.
- * All but two individuals reported past and present use of the following forms of public assistance: foodstamps, general assistance, and medicaid. Use was reported as sporadic and temporary.
- * All of the individuals reported using both shelters and streets for sleeping purposes.

From a geographic standpoint, the researchers attempted to identify the areas of town most heavily traveled (see appendix for a detailed map of these findings). The areas most utilized were the streets of Champaign and the University of Illinois campus. The streets of Champaign are of primary importance according to the location of services. Routes heavily traveled are those that link the various services. The campus area was reported as very conducive to survival for several reasons. First, one individual reported it to be "a great spot for panhandling", saying that students tend to be more sympathetic to the homeless. Second, due to the diversity of the student population, blending in with others is much easier. To quote one man, "It is a lot easier to blend in with a bunch of scruffy looking graduate students than with businessmen and secretaries." There were several creative skills mentioned in the art of blending in, ranging from storing bags and carrying planning calendars, to wearing collegiate clothing (particularly greek letters and Illini wear). The third reason, is the wide array of facilities available, such as vending machines, TV rooms, lounges, and 24-hour laundromats. Although the campus area provides the above benefits, there were two major disadvantages cited. Due to the student population, there is tremendous competition for affordable housing and entry level jobs. X

Another concern of street life is finding food and shelter. Food is obtained from several sources: meals from area shelters, foodstamps, sympathetic restaurants, churches, and fast food dumpsters. All reported spending nights on the streets in places such as: parks, laundromats, abandoned cars, libraries, lounges, and apartment stairwells.

Just like other cultures in this community, the homeless have cliques, subgroups, and places to gather socially on a daily basis. There is an extensive social network with a feeling of comradeship and support. This is illustrated through the use of nicknames, and the mentor system, in which a new "street person" is taken under the wings of a "veteran" and "shown the ropes" of street life in Champaign-Urbana.

Finally, the above survival tactics should not be confused with a choice of being on the streets or a quality of life once there. Individuals are willing to receive services, but often do not possess the skills or means to access and maintain such services.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, most of those interviewed stressed their desire to escape the streets through full-time employment. Homeless individuals are difficult to identify and therefore, with some exceptions, a relatively hidden population. The stereotyped "baglady or street person" with a dirty and unkempt appearance, carrying bags or pushing shopping carts is an inaccurate picture of the majority of today's homeless in Champaign-Urbana. Had individuals not been identified as homeless through

shelter interviews, researchers would have been unaware of their identity. Individuals on the streets, compared to those in shelters, were more difficult to approach and interview. They were hesitant, cautious, and wary of intruders. This is due to skills in street survival, protectedness, and vulnerability to police. When approached within a safe, protected environment, such as a shelter, homeless individuals were very accommodating and willing to talk to outsiders. Once provided with the entrance to the shelter, researchers were invited by those interviewed in the shelter to speak with their acquaintances on the street. All homeless individuals encountered did, at one time, spend time within the shelters and on the street. Consequently, it was clear that the homeless individuals within the shelters and on the streets are one in the same.

The Homeless in C-U in Relation to the Problem Nationwide:

Estimates vary as to the number of homeless people throughout the nation. The Community for Creative Nonviolence (Washington, D.C.) which serves as a clearinghouse for information and data on the homeless, places the homeless population at 2 to 3 million, or about 1% of the general population. The tendency is to consider homelessness a problem unique to large cities. The most common perception is that these 2 to 3 million homeless people are located in large urban areas. This research suggests otherwise.

The number of homeless people in Champaign-Urbana represents about 1% of the general population. This figure mirrors the national average. Throughout the nation, the number of homeless is increasing making this a problem of major social significance. In addition, nationally the rate of homeless women and children is increasing at a faster pace. The homeless person is not the stereotypical "bag lady" or alcoholic middle-aged man. Most homeless people are similar to the rest of society except that as a result of some crisis they are without a personal residence. These trends can be observed in this community as well.

There is no doubt that homelessness is a problem for Champaign-Urbana. Service providers are unanimous in their assessment that the number of homeless has grown in recent years and continues to rise. It is also clear that the number of homeless women and children are increasing, adding a new dimension to the problem.

The problem of homelessness is compounded by other concerns. The amount of affordable housing has been steadily declining in this country over the past decade. Single room occupancy units, the housing most accessible to the homeless, have been disappearing due to urban development and gentrification. Rents have increased dramatically, rising faster than the incomes of the poor and near-poor, throwing many people into a state of homelessness. Entry level jobs, where available, rarely pay enough to support a family and often do not provide any medical care. A person working fulltime, 40 hours a week and 52 weeks a year, at minimum wage is barely above the poverty line. If that person is supporting another person, that family unit falls into poverty.

* Linkage between service providers so the various resources available are known to all who work with the homeless (particularly for the numerous volunteers)

Uniqueness of Champaign-Urbana Homeless:

While the homeless in C-U are similar in many ways to the nation-wide picture, there are some dimensions which are unique to this community. Compared to other similar communities, C-U has a strong base of services for the homeless. Shelter, food and clothing are available to the needy, making the homeless population observably similar to the general population. There is a strong volunteer effort as witnessed by the level of church involvement and the composition of staffing at the shelters and pantries. A significant portion of the homeless are from the community, have family nearby, or are from the central Illinois area.

Being a university town, this area differs in relation to the homeless. A person who may be wandering can find it easier to blend in on a college campus. A university this size provides many resources and public places to serve the immediate needs of a homeless person. There tends to be a more relaxed attitude and greater acceptance of the homeless.

Geographically, C-U is located between three large urban centers, Chicago, Indianapolis and St. Louis, and serves as an easy access point to transportation south. This position makes it a passing through and returning point for many, particularly homeless men.

Although the university may be advantageous to the homeless in some ways, it presents two significant disadvantages. Affordable housing is very difficult to find in C-U. Due to competition from the student population, rents are relatively high in the types of housing potentially available to the homeless. In addition, the job market is very competitive because of large numbers of working students. Entry level jobs such as those at fast-food restaurants are often filled by students willing to work odd hours and part-time. Employers would prefer to hire students over a person without an address and who has a record of being unemployed. Many work-study jobs consist of service oriented jobs created by the needs of the university, but are available to students only.

So while the university community offers help in some areas, it makes things difficult for the homeless person in other ways. The range of available services, the liberal attitude, and the openness of the campus area provide positive elements. However, the all-important areas of affordable housing and employment for the homeless are severely curtailed by the student population.

Recommendations:

The most pressing need in relation to the problem of homelessness in the Champaign-Urbana community is a better networking of resources. Services do exist in C-U, but what is lacking is an effective system to link available services to those who are in need. Effective service for the immediate needs of the homeless can be developed through:

- * A system which promotes improved communication between service providers
- * Linkage between service providers so the various resources available are known to all who work with the homeless (particularly for the numerous volunteers)

- * Outreach to those who are turned away or intimidated by the service structure
- * Follow-up on the services provided

Preventive and long-term work are needed to return the homeless to residency and keep those who are near-homeless from losing their homes. Services of this nature must stress:

- * Job search and employment training services
- * Starter or seed money to get people settled in a dwelling so they have an address and a sense of stability
- * Greater services and funding for home maintenance and improvement, and heating assistance

Based on the information gathered, in addition to the above guidelines, the Research Task Force has specific suggestions which would aid service to the homeless in Champaign-Urbana:

- * Develop a local coalition of service providers in order to share knowledge and resources as well as serve as an advocacy group on behalf of the homeless
- * Make greater use of the specialties and skills of the university population through a volunteer pool available to the service agencies and the homeless population (could include job training, legal aid, counseling services)
- * Create a traveling health team (similar to a bloodmobile) which would regularly visit certain sites and provide immediate medical care and referral for the homeless; such a team would use a minimum of bureaucratic procedure and meet the homeless in settings where they feel comfortable
- * Create a traveling outreach team to link people with available services; an interdisciplinary team which would visit shelters on an informal basis to provide information and serve as a guide to resources
- * A written resource guide for service providers and homeless people outlining the services in the community
- * Support groups for families of homeless people
- * Group homes modeled after half-way houses in order to aid people into reentering the system after the initial crisis
- * Day centers with activities and services for the homeless open during the hours when the shelters are closed; such centers could provide phone services for job searches both for placing and receiving calls, job listings, and serve as an advocacy center and promote mutual support and self-help

APPENDIX

The Task Force understands that some of the recommendations require a strong commitment of funding and support from outside sources. Nevertheless, dealing effectively with the problem of homelessness requires more than immediate stop-gap measures. We need to take a preventive posture so that the number of homeless does not continue to increase at the present rate. We need to develop strategies where people are able to remove themselves permanently from being homeless and not be caught in the drift between shelters, short-term solutions with friends and families, and life on the street. This kind of direction requires creative planning and working together by all those who are interested in the concerns of the homeless in Champaign-Urbana.

- * Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)
- * Counseling, referral, advocacy, and education
- * Special medical and dental programs for children

Planned Parenthood of Champaign County

- * Physical exams for women
- * Prenatal care and education
- * Pregnancy testing
- * Education and counseling regarding sexual abuse prevention, decision making, family planning, sterilization, infertility, menopause, PMS, and birth control
- * Contraceptive services and supplies
- * Screening and treatment for infections

Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

- * Help in applying for veterans' benefits
- * Help in finding housing
- * Help in using Danville veterans' hospital
- * Referral to other veterans' service agencies

Prairie Center for Substance Abuse

- * Residential treatment program
- * Outpatient treatment and counseling

People's Place Health Center

- * Physical exams for women
- * Acute and chronic illness treatment
- * Immunizations, chronic cultures
- * Obstetrical/gynecological care
- * X-ray and lab referrals
- * Contraceptive care, pap smear
- * Tests for syphilis and gonorrhea
- * Tests for Stickle Cell Anemia, sickle
- * Electrocardiograms
- * Care of feet
- * Dental care
- * Mental health counseling
- * Education
- * Client advocacy

Mental Health Center/Champaign

- * Crisis-emergency services
- * 24 hour crisis telephone line
- * Help in finding housing
- * Psychiatric help for the mentally ill
- * Counseling
- * Children-Adolescent Program
- * Outpatient follow-up

Hospitals

Carle Foundation Hospital
611 West Park
Urbana
337-3311

Bureau City Hospital
407 South 4th
Champaign
337-3533

Mercy Hospital
1400 West Park
Champaign
337-2000

HEALTH SERVICES IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

- * Flu shots for individuals 60 years or older who reside in Champaign County
- * Sexually transmitted disease clinic
- * TB skin testing
- * HTLV-III antibody screening for the detection of AIDS (done anonymously)
- * Blood pressure checks
- * Vision and hearing screenings
- * Blood sugar screening
- * Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)
- * Counseling, referral, advocacy, and education
- * Special medical and dental programs for children

Planned Parenthood of Champaign County

- * Physical exams for women
- * Prenatal care and education
- * Pregnancy testing
- * Education and counseling regarding sexual abuse prevention, decision making, family planning, sterilization, infertility, menopause, PMS, and birth control
- * Contraceptive services and supplies
- * Screening and treatment for infections

Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

- * Help in applying for veterans' benefits
- * Help in finding housing
- * Help in using Danville veterans' hospital
- * Referral to other veterans' service agencies

Prairie Center for Substance Abuse

- * Residential Treatment Program
- * Outpatient treatment and counseling

Francis Nelson Health Center

- * Physical examinations/health screens
- * Acute and chronic illness treatment
- * Immunizations, throat cultures
- * Obstetrical/newborn care
- * X-ray and lab referrals
- * Contraceptive care, pap smears
- * Tests for syphilis and gonorrhea
- * Tests for Sickle Cell Anemia, mono
- * Electrocardiograms
- * Care of feet
- * Dental care
- * Mental health counseling
- * Education
- * Client advocacy

Mental Health Center/Champaign

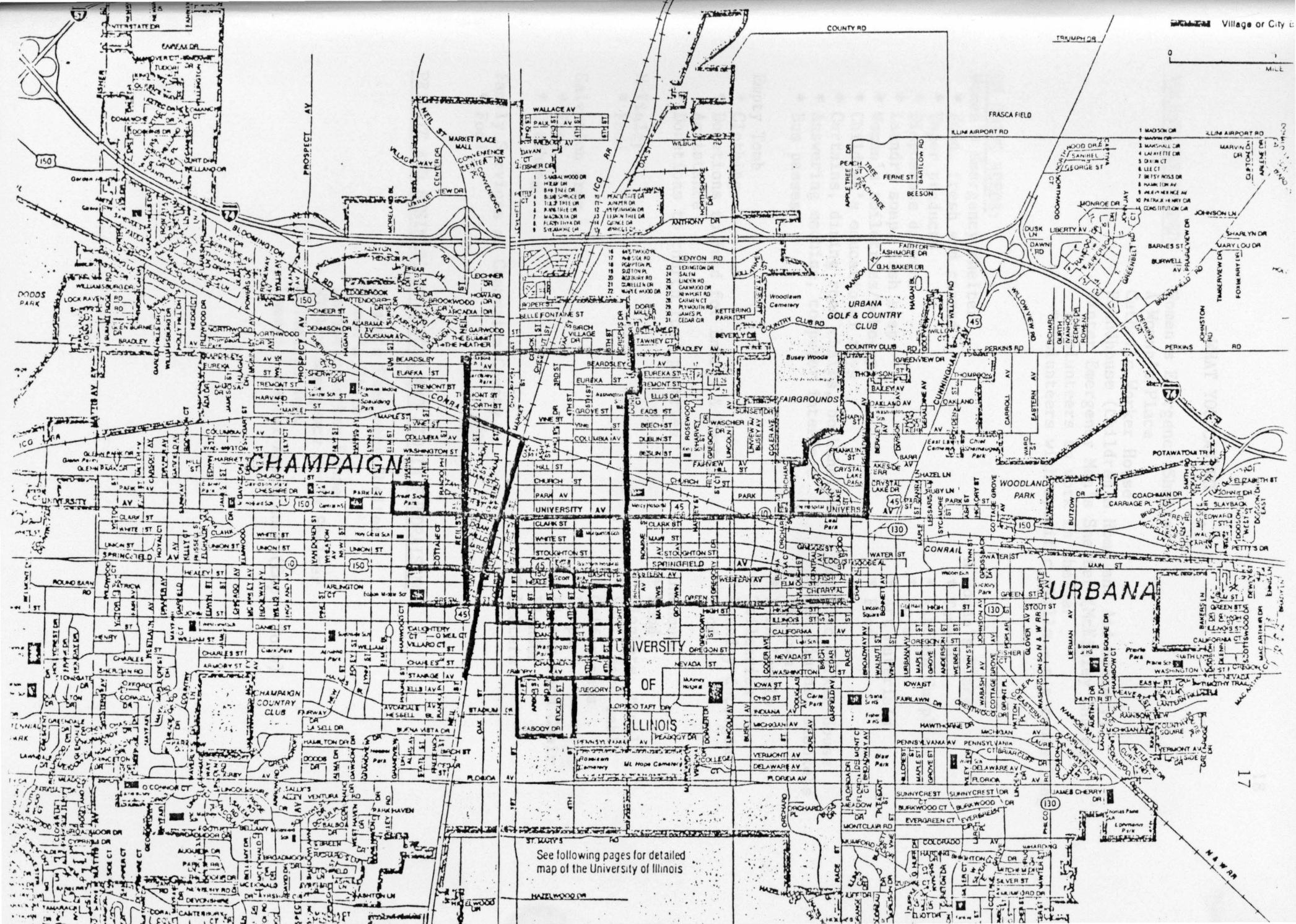
- * Crisis-emergency services
- * 24 hour crisis telephone line
- * Help in finding housing
- * Psychiatric help for the mentally ill
- * Counseling
- * Children-Adolescent Program
- * Outpatient follow-up

Hospitals

Carle Foundation Hospital
611 West Park
Urbana
337-3311

Burnham City Hospital
407 South 4th
Champaign
337-2533

Mercy Hospital
1400 West Park
Champaign
337-2000



CHAMPAIGN

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

URBANA

See following pages for detailed map of the University of Illinois

Village or City of

0 1 MILE

WHAT YOU CAN DO

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Women's Emergency Shelter
 A Woman's Place
 Catholic Worker House
 Roundhouse (Children's Home and Aid Society)
 Winter Emergency Men's Shelter (McKinley Church)
 * Volunteers to work in shelter
 * Volunteers with specific skills - e.g counseling

ON GOING NEEDS:Women's Emergency Shelter

- * Food, fresh and canned
- * Paper products
- * Disposable diapers
- * Laundry soap, dish soap
- * Women's toiletries/make-up
- * Children's educational toys
- * Curtains, dining room chairs, bookshelves
- * Answering machine, computer interface
- * Bus passes

Empty Tomb

- * Clothing
- * Donations to Fund for Energy & Rental Assistance
- * Donations to church food pantries

McKinley

- * Food

Salvation Army

- * Food
- * Clothing

Family Services of Champaign County

- * Food

A Woman's Place

- * Towels
- * Kitchen Supplies
- * Toys
- * Art Materials
- * Food

Catholic Worker House

- * Bed Linens, blankets
- * Pillows
- * Dish Towels
- * Toiletries
- * Laundry detergent
- * Food

Roundhouse

- * Food
- * Blankets, towels
- * Small card table
- * Coffee cups
- * Lamps
- * Dining room Chair
- * Blender
- * Beaters

PRIVATE AND BUSINESS DONATIONS AND AID IN FUNDRAISING:

Women's Emergency Shelter
 Women's Place
 Catholic Worker House
 Winter Emergency Men's Shelter
 Salvation Army
 Energy & Rental Assistance (Empty Tomb)